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CHALLENGE

FIGHT FOR COMMUNISM · LUCHE POR EL COMUNISMO · PLP

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PLP's Ideas Spreading

'Cutbacks No!' Students Take to the Streets



NEWARK, NJ, April 7 — "If Cami Anderson thinks that putting me in jail is going to stop me as a parent, then she is sadly mistaken," said a PTA President who is banned from entering any Newark public school and was arrested after he spoke out against the Newark schools superintendent's plan called One Newark. He went on to say, "I have to keep it real, if (U.S. Education Secretary) Arne Duncan came here, then we have to go after him and Obama. Anyone that makes money off the backs of our kids, whether it be a pastor, elected official or whoever. So going to jail is not going to stop me."

This fight is against the racist cutbacks on the students, mainly black and Latino. They suffer from the ruling class's drive for superprofits. The bosses track these students into low-wage jobs, racist unemployment, or into the military to kill Arab, Muslim, and Asian youth on behalf of U.S. imperialism.

The education struggle has intensified as students, workers and parents took their fight to the streets with two big demonstrations over the past month. On March 18, more than 300 students and workers marched to protest the cutbacks in store for us. On April 3, more than a thousand students walked out of school to protest against the cuts and the Foundation for Newark's Future, the group that administers the $100 million grant to the city's schools by Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg.

The March 18 demonstration, organized by the Newark Education Workers, or NEW (a caucus within the Newark Teachers Union), Newark Student Union, and NJ Communities, reflected a growing anger among those in the struggle.

At the start of the march, a member of Newark Student Union told a member of Progressive Labor Party that she overheard a teacher telling another teacher to avoid the rally because communists were going to be there. She said she interrupted that teacher and told him she was going and that he should stop being an anti-communist.

Energy at the demonstration was high, as the group of over 300 shut down the center of the city, Broad and Market, during rush hour. After one or two speeches, the students marched down Broad Street and took over the intersection of Raymond Boulevard and Broad. Despite the cops' demands to clear the area, the streets remained blocked for about 15 minutes.

At that time, several people spoke passionately about the need to address the bigger picture: imperialism and capitalism. "This is about power," said a member of the People's Organization for Progress, a community group in Newark that holds anti-racist rallies. "This is about social control. This is about a decaying imperialist system."

Another teacher from the NEW Caucus spoke about the need to understand capitalism and how it really works.

While this rally showed a growing militancy within the working class as well as PL's influence in winning workers and students to our world analysis, it still reflected many of the bosses' ideas. This included supporting one politician over another and nationalism: falling into the illusion that a black politician will serve the interests of Newark's largely black and Latino working class. Superintendent Anderson and Governor Chris Christie were the main focus of the event, with most of the chants reverting to "Cami Must Go!" Many dem-

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Previous year's May Day: high school students lead the march. Onward to 2014!

OUR FIGHT

✯Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

✯Only the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today's world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

✯Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world's workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

✯While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim "communism is dead," capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

✯Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society's benefits and burdens.

✯Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of "race." Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit black, Latino, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

✯Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

✯Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

✯Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion's false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

✯Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP's criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a "following" around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual's writing of an article.

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Editorial

In U.S.-Russian Rulers' Fight Over Ukraine, All Workers Lose



U.S. and Russian imperialists are engaged in an all-out struggle for control over the territories of the former Soviet Union. U.S. rulers have gained a foothold in Eastern Europe, up to the border of Ukraine. But Russia's vital oil and gas pipelines run through Ukraine to European Union (EU) countries, netting Russian bosses huge profits and a stranglehold on EU energy supplies.

In the short run, Russian bosses appear to be winning. But this is just one battle in a long war, and U.S. bosses will not willingly surrender to the emerging Russian power grab. Given the stakes, the conflict between these imperialist rivals could easily escalate into a broader, open conflict.

Russian-Backed Rebellion in Ukraine

Putin has massed 40,000 Russian potential invaders on Ukraine's border. According to U.S. Air Force Gen. Philip Breedlove, supreme NATO commander, the Russian force includes "support for planes and helicopters as well as military hospitals and electronic warfare equipment." These troops, the general said, "could accomplish a major incursion into eastern or southern Ukraine ... in between three and five days" (Wall Street Journal, 4/2/14).

Putin's nationalist strategy is to oppress the Russian working class while rebuilding the Russian empire for the profits of Russian capitalists. Having overrun Crimea, Putin and his oligarch cronies now aim to grab other strategic parts of Ukraine. In addition to threatening a future invasion, they are fostering an armed rebellion among pro-Russians inside the country. The imperialists' ultimate goal is to absorb all the countries of the former Soviet Union.

Mikheil Saakashvili, the anti-Putin politician who became president of Georgia with the backing of U.S. billionaire George Soros and the CIA in the 2003 Rose Revolution, has first-hand experience with resurgent Russian militarism. In 2008, Russia overran Georgia and carved out "independent" states in Russia-leaning South Ossetia and Abkhazia. In an April 5 opinion piece in *Foreign Policy* headlined "War is Coming," Saakashvili wrote:

> *Russian strategists are talking about a 'weekend of rage' that could involve some kind of armed siege of government buildings in southern and eastern Ukraine. If these local provocateurs and 'self-defense forces' manage to hold these buildings as they did in Crimea, it might serve as a basis for further military intervention.*

Events on the following day, April 6, lent further credence to Saakashvili's scenario:

> *Crowds of pro-Russian demonstrators stormed government buildings Sunday in two major cities in eastern Ukraine. In Luhansk, 20 miles west of the Russian border, hundreds of people surrounded the local headquarters of the security service and later scaled the facade to plant a Russian flag on the roof. In Donetsk, to the southwest, a large group of people surged into the provincial government building and smashed windows. A gathering of several hundred, many of them waving Russian flags, then listened to speeches delivered from a balcony emblazoned with a banner reading "Donetsk Republic."*

U.S. Bosses' Weak Counterpunch

NATO's response to Kremlin aggression has been muted and rear-guard: a couple of U.S. warships dispatched to the Black Sea, increased air policing over the Baltics, Romania and Poland.

But while Russian boots cross Crimean soil, NATO, by its own admission, stands unprepared to deploy its foot soldiers beyond their barracks:

> *The trickiest question may be whether NATO should move troops into Eastern Europe, where the alliance currently has few installations. Countries like Poland are pushing hard for such a shift, but it would almost certainly be seen as highly provocative by Moscow. While NATO's air and sea options are fairly clear, Gen. Breedlove said, "Frankly…we have work to do on what the ground options would be"* (Wall Street Journal).

U.S. capitalists, and especially Big Oil, recognize the political advantage they gain from controlling the flow of gas and oil to maintain their top dog status among the world's imperialists. For them this is an absolute necessity, not some breakable addiction to profits. Their long-term strategy is to counter the Kremlin by flooding world markets with newly

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No Honor Among Thieves

The bosses honor their pacts only as long as they gain some advantage from them. In 1994, President Bill Clinton signed the Budapest Agreement to protect the territorial integrity of Ukraine. But as the New York Times noted (4/5/14):

> But now, as American officials have distanced themselves from the Budapest Memorandum in light of Russia's takeover of Crimea, calling promises made in Budapest "nonbinding," the United States is being forced at the same time to make reassurances in Asia. Japanese officials, a senior American military official said, "keep asking, 'are you going to do the same thing to us when something happens?'" America's longstanding promise to protect Japan against hostile foes — read China and North Korea — has suddenly come under the microscope.

In other words, the wavering of U.S. imperialists on Ukraine is upsetting the allies they'll need to count on for any broader war. To ward off Japanese rulers' doubts, the Pentagon has dispatched five missile ships to Tokyo.

Capitalism's Lies Negate Justice for Kyam Livingston



BROOKLYN, NY, March 21 — Today was the second speak-out and eighth event commemorating the death of Kyam Livingston, who was killed due to the cops' deliberate racist medical neglect at Brooklyn Central Bookings. It's now nine months since she died last July 21 when her agonized cries for medical attention were ignored. So far the authorities have answered none of the questions people have been asking.

The struggle for Justice for Kyam, and in all the recent struggles on behalf of those who have been killed by the racist criminal injustice system, have occurred amid a growing desperation for the working class. Unemployment is at unimagined levels. Wages have been falling for 40 years. Racism is on the rise as shown by these killings by the cops of mostly young black and Latino youth and workers.

Capitalism is, indeed, in crisis. The system has shown its intransigence and its culture of indifference towards the working class, as a relative of Kyam pointed out, by not even giving information on what happened, refusing to answer demands that the killings be stopped and the killer cops punished.

A member of the City Councilman Hakeem Jeffries' staff attended the event. He said, "Just call our office. We'll see how we can help." This resembles what the office of the newly elected District Attorney said at our January speak-out. The new mayor has been in power now for three months. This is a short time for them, but for people waiting for answers it's long and anger-driven.

"Democratic" capitalism maintains that all the people in this society have a fair chance. Over the past nine months it's clear to the Justice for Kyam Committee that this is a bald-faced lie. And in fact, it has become increasingly obvious that the profit system simply does not care what happens to working-class people, especially black and Latino. As one speaker said at this speak-out, "A system that creates these problems doesn't deserve to exist."

This second speak-out in our Justice for Kyam campaign occurred on a very nice day and drew more participants than during the January snowstorm. More people spoke up about personal grievances against the court system, jails and other aspects of the criminal injustice system.

Some of the stories made us angry, such as the black woman worker's whose son was severely beaten by police at Riker's Island while waiting to be charged. This happened many months ago and he's still at Riker's and has not been charged. No one has ever investigated this beating.

Another speaker described the death of James Parrish, an unarmed black man with cerebral palsy who was shot and killed by Brooklyn cops. No charges were ever brought against them.

But, what can we expect from a racist criminal injustice system? We don't need politicians to fight for us. If we rely on them, they will turn our struggles into passivity and reliance on elections.

The Kyam Livingston Committee has grown closer over the course of this campaign. PLP members who are active in it have consistently raised with individuals how capitalism will never care about the working class because we are merely there as producers of wealth for those in power. We, the working class, must recognize that only we can speak for ourselves. The Progressive Labor Party points workers towards the ideas of communism as the solution to our problems.✪

Beat DC Metro Racism — Force Worker's Rehiring

WASHINGTON, DC, March 26 — Metro bosses were stopped in their tracks today in the face of determined workers sticking up for one of their own. Metro workers, community activists in the returning citizens movement, public health workers in the Metropolitan Washington Public Health Association, PLP members and many others have been sharpening the struggle against racist background checks for months.

Metro bosses and union leaders are nervous because of our bold, open offensive. We took it to another level with a planned confrontation at the monthly Metro board meeting, armed with an open letter to the board signed by outraged workers, many of whom we had never even met before.

We exposed the lies of General Manager Sarles, who had testified in public that a Metro employee who was out sick would not have to undergo a criminal background check when he/she returned to work. But behind closed doors Sarles' agents were firing a bus driver returning to work after a year-long struggle with cancer. When his background check turned up two previous convictions, he was told he was terminated. Both convictions occurred more than ten years before he was employed by Metro.

Afraid of the workers and continued public criticism, the bosses called him in at the last minute and rehired him on the spot. One of the driver's friends texted us: "how grateful he is to have u guys jump to his corner and did not even know him. Shows that u guys just don't talk the talk. You guys make it happen."

Now is the time to press our offensive against racist mass incarceration, the New Jim Crow. We must force Metro to stop its racist policies. Metro must create new personnel policies that don't discriminate and stop reinforcing the systematic racist injustice that characterizes all of capitalism.

This struggle is challenging because racism is a key part of capitalism's effort to stigmatize and divide groups of workers. The capitalists want to divide ex-offenders from workers who have escaped being arrested in the drug wars, pay everyone less and make off with the profits.

This small victory today came because all workers said NO to injustice. We can't stop now. We have to fight for the big victory of overthrowing bosses like Sarles and having our own system that relies on unity and equality of workers — communism.✪



Hundreds Blast Deporter-in-Chief at White House

WASHINGTON, DC, April 5 — Today over 400 workers and students marched over three miles from D.C.'s Mt. Pleasant neighborhood to the White House, condemning President Barack Obama as the "Deporter-in-Chief." Demonstrators called for a halt to all deportations. Several individuals whose families had been separated by deportations pledged to camp out on Obama's doorstep until deportation orders for family members were reversed.

A local planning committee led by the National Day Laborer Organizing Network included students from area universities, immigrants' rights organizations, and a PLP member. Several PL'ers participated in the march, distributing 400 May Day leaflets as well as copies of the 2013 May Day issue of CHALLENGE containing some sharp articles on immigration. They called on marchers to join the upcoming May Day march on April 26 in New York. PL'ers made many new contacts. Afterwards several marchers came to a dinner at the PL'ers' home to discuss continuing the struggle.

The march was inspiring. It created a spirit of solidarity and power that determined fightbacks can build. It overcame the fear and isolation that we often experience. But the march also reflected the ongoing challenge of divisions within the working class over racism. The march included mainly Latinos with a few whites and fewer blacks. Despite an effort to reach out to black workers and youth, the march failed to include a significant group outside the Latino community, a weakness that must be overcome.

Fortunately, there is also a surging multi-racial, anti-racist movement led by PLP that clearly points out that all forms of racism hurt all groups of workers by destroying the solidarity needed to fight and defeat the capitalist class. Racist divisions in the working class also give capitalists the maneuvering room afforded by super-profits reaped from the super-exploitation of black and Latino sections of the working class.

The strategic insight that racism hurts all workers has not yet penetrated the mass movement adequately in the U.S. or elsewhere. Consequently, the bosses still hold the trump cards in the class struggle. But this can be reversed!

PLP will bring ALL workers together on May Day to fight back as a class against racism and the capitalist system as a whole. This approach must be reflected in all organizing efforts. Bring black and white people to immigration rights events; bring Latinos and whites to fights against racist murders by the police, and unify the working class to topple capitalism, the root of all modern oppressions.✪

Teacher Union Mis-leaders: Rulers' Jr. Partners



PLP organizing youth to fight racism and imperialist warmakers in 1988.
The battle rages on today. Banner reads, "Fighting Racism is the Best Eucation."

NEW YORK CITY, April 6 — Thirty-five thousand education workers have been laid off in NY State since the economic crisis of 2008. Furthermore, millions of dollars in Governor Cuomo's new budget is slated for Charter Schools, leading to even more layoffs. And the response from our statewide union leadership? Silence.

At a statewide convention this weekend of 2,400 representatives of union locals in the NY State United Teachers (NYSUT), the mis-leadership settled for meaningless resolutions calling for the removal of NYS education commissioner John King and only critiqued the timing, but not the essence, of Common Core implementation. Under the guise of "raising standards for all," the Common Core will further legitimize the main function of capitalist education: to sort future workers into the few slots at the high end of the labor market, the many slots at the low end, along with unemployment, incarceration and military enlistment.

Unions which facilitate implementation of such regimes, while keeping workers from fighting back, are useful to the ruling class. NYSUT, though composed of workers, is an arm of the bosses' state apparatus as it tries to pacify workers whom the ruling class is directly attacking.

It was also useful for the rulers to have Randi Weingarten — head of the national American Federation of Teachers (AFT) — visit the Ukraine to offer "solidarity" and "encouragement" to its distinctly fascist-led "democratic" movement which is aimed at undermining one of the U.S. bosses' main imperialist rivals, Russia.

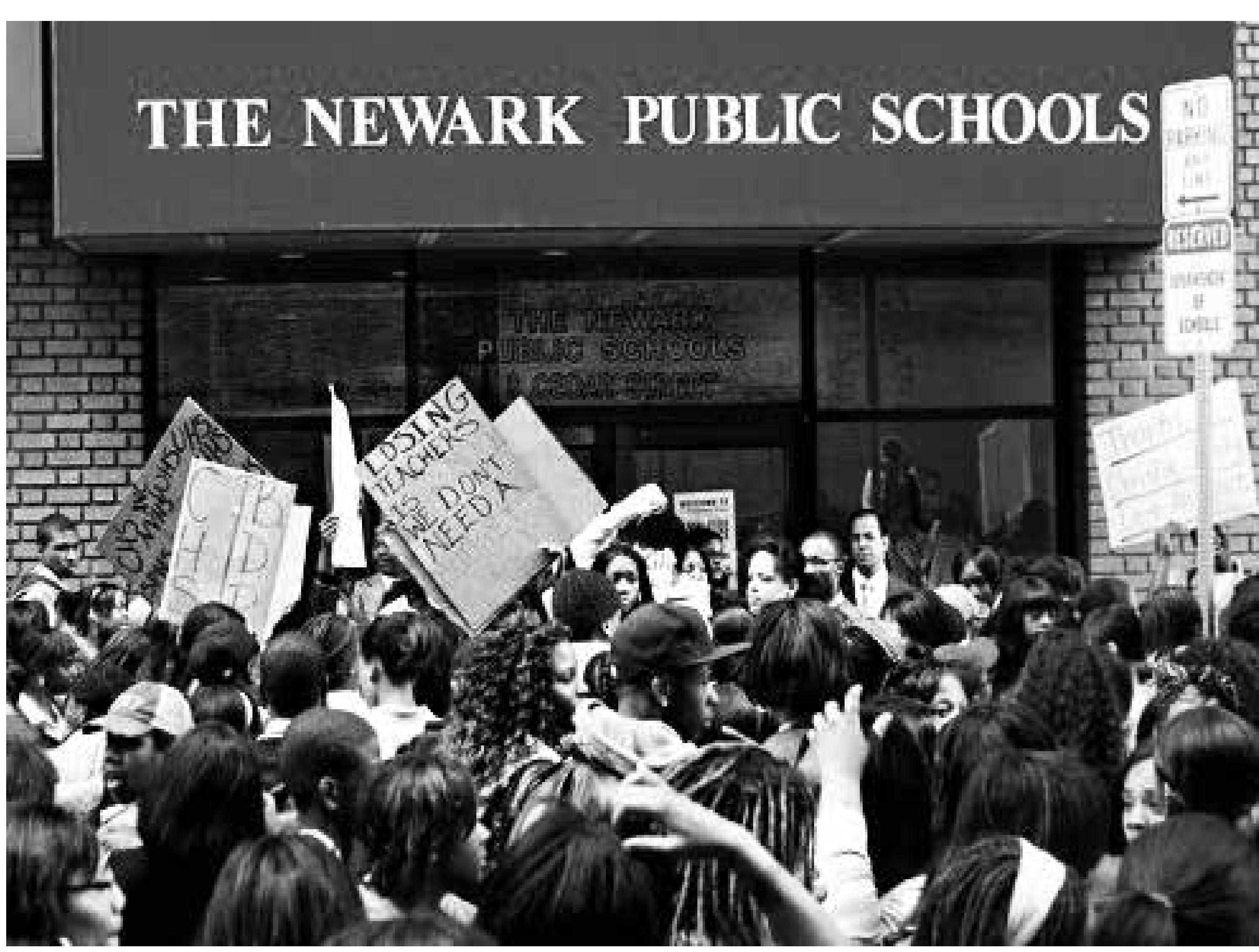
A willing puppet of U.S. bosses, Weingarten has been at the helm of major unions for over 17 years and has midwifed the birth of every major attack on education workers — as well as their students and families — that today's misleaders pretend to oppose: merit pay, Common Core, charter schools, and more. Signs that these mis-leaders' thin veneer of legitimacy is wearing off were on display this weekend. Opposition rank-and-file forces exposed the fascist-style repression of dissent the UFT's ruling Unity caucus imposes within its ranks in order to effectively fulfill its role as junior partner to the ruling class in controlling teacher labor.

Education workers responded well to PL literature with its communist analysis of education under capitalism, in general, and the current union elections at the convention in particular. Rotten union leadership can't prevent workers from wanting a better system, though that's the major role these mis-leaders play as the "labor lieutenants of capital."

As we head to May Day and the next school year, communist educators must be bolder and more determined to win the many teachers closer to PLP and the fight for communism.✪

Students Take to the Streets

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onstrators held "Baraka" signs in support of Newark mayoral candidate Ras Baraka, whose group has considerable influence in this struggle.

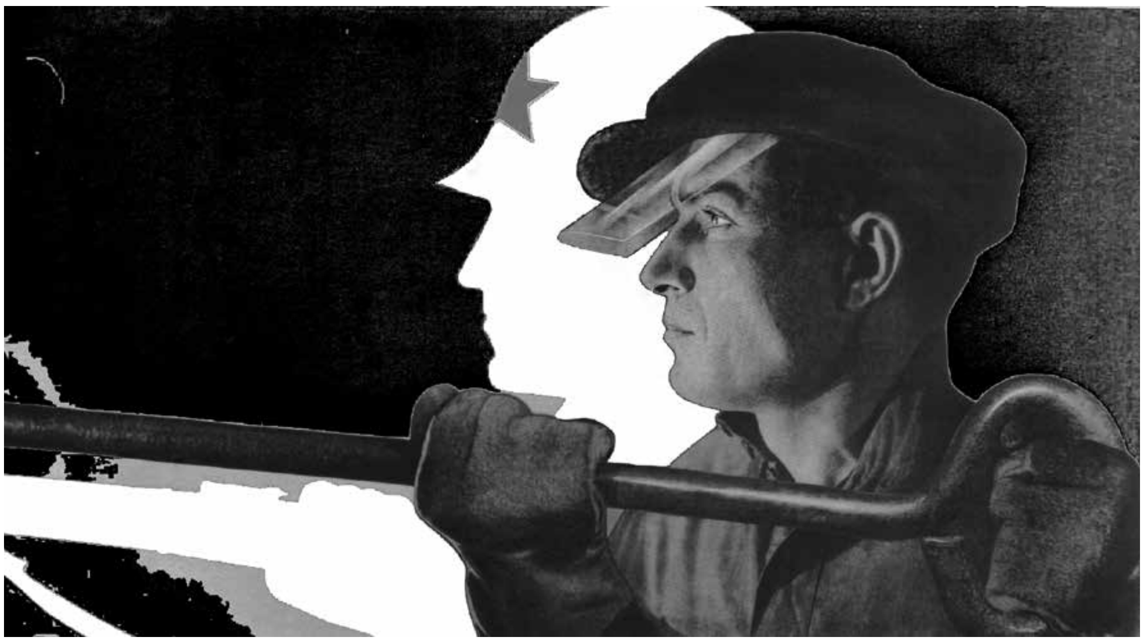
The same contradictions were on display during the April 3 walkout. The students defied pushback from their administrators and an attempt by Newark police to intimidate them by standing outside the school. Many students chanted, "They say cut back, we say fight back!"

Newark Student Union President Kristen Towkaniuk acknowledged that the problem was bigger than Superintendent Anderson: "Even if we get Cami Anderson out, even if we stop the One Newark Plan, somebody else will come in and continue doing what she is doing." While this is correct, there weren't any broader critiques of the proposed budget cuts or the capitalist system. The demonstration stuck to the same chants and political content as before, in tune with speaker Ras Baraka.

As this battle sharpens, the fight to win workers to the idea of running the world rather than depending on politicians or a "better" superintendent is essential. While we are making some headway in bringing workers and students to our study group on Vladimir Lenin's *What is To Be Done?*, we need to win others to put forward a communist analysis in the rallies, walkouts, and everyday struggles that workers are engaged in. We are optimistic that over time more workers and students will be won to our ideas.✪

Natural Factors Caused 1932 Famine, Soviet Efforts Ended It

Part 1 of the article on the Soviet famine of 1932-33 traced its causes to environmental factors leading to a poor harvest which did not produce enough grain to feed the entire population. While there were other contributing factors — crop disease infestations, shortage of labor to harvest the fields and of horses to do the plowing and soil exhaustion reducing fertility — Ukrainian nationalists (who later fought on the Nazi side in World War II) spread the myth that the Soviet government deliberately cut off grain to the Ukraine, causing the famine. There was absolutely no evidence supporting this. The Soviet government reduced grain exports and diverted supplies to the famine-stricken areas, trying to distribute what grain was available in an egalitarian manner but this did not meet the overall need (see CHALLENGE 3/26).



Soviet Union's propaganda poster.
Workers and soldiers are needed to fight for a communist future.

The Question of Grain Exports

Like the pre-revolutionary Czarist regimes, the Soviet government exported grain. Contracts were signed in advance, which created the dilemma. Professor Mark Tauger of West Virginia University has spent the past two decades studying Russian famines and the famine of 1932-33. He describes the situation with grain exports as follows:

> *The low 1931 harvest and reallocations of grain to famine areas forced the regime to curtail grain exports from 5.2 million tons in 1931 to 1.73 million in 1932; they declined to 1.68 million in 1933. Grain exported in 1932 and 1933 could have fed many people and reduced the famine: The 354,000 tons exported during the first half of 1933, for example, could have provided nearly 2 million people with daily rations of l kilogram for six months. Yet these exports were less than half of the 750,000 tons exported in the first half of 1932. … [A]vailable evidence indicates that further reductions or cessation of Soviet exports could have had serious consequences. Grain prices fell in world markets and turned the terms of trade against the Soviet Union in the early 1930s, its indebtedness rose and its potential ability to pay declined, causing western bankers and officials to consider seizure of Soviet property abroad and denial of future credits in case of Soviet default. Failure to export thus would have threatened the fulfillment of its industrialization plans and, according to some observers, the stability of the regime.*

While the USSR was exporting it was also allocating much more grain to seed and famine relief. Tauger documents the fact that the Central Committee allocated more than half a million tons to Ukraine and the North Caucasus in February, and more than half a million tons to Ukraine alone by April 1933. The government also accumulated some three million tons in reserves during this period and then allocated 2 million tons from that to famine relief. Soviet archival sources indicate that the regime returned five million tons of grain from procurements back to villages throughout the USSR in the first half of 1933. All of these amounts greatly exceed the amount exported in this period.

However, there was simply not enough food to feed the whole population, even if all exports had been stopped instead of just drastically curtailed, as they were. According to Tauger:

> *…[E]ven a complete cessation of exports would not have been enough to prevent famine. This situation makes it difficult to accept the interpretation of the famine as the result of the 1932 grain procurements and as a conscious act of genocide. The harvest of 1932 essentially made a famine inevitable.*

Grain delivery targets (procurement quotas) were drastically reduced multiple times for both collective and individual farmers in order to share the scarcity. Some was returned to the villages. It is these collection efforts, often carried out in a very harsh way, that are highlighted by promoters of the "intentionalist" interpretation as evidence of callousness and indifference to peasants' lives or even of intent to punish or kill.

Feed 40 Million People in the Cities

Meanwhile the government used these procurements to feed 40 million people in the cities and industrial sites who were also starving, further evidence that the harvest was small. In May 1932 the Soviet government legalized the private trade in grain. But very little grain was sold this way in 1932-1933. This too is a further indication of a small 1932 harvest. (Tauger 1991, 72-74)

About 10 percent of the population of Ukraine died from the famine or associated diseases. But 90 percent survived, the vast majority of whom were peasants, army men of peasant background or workers of peasant origin. The surviving peasants had to work very hard, under conditions of insufficient food, to sow and bring in the 1933 harvest. They did so with significant aid from the Soviet government.

A smaller population, reduced in size by deaths, weakened by hunger, with fewer draught animals, was nevertheless able to produce a successful harvest in 1933 and put an end to the famine. This is yet more evidence that the 1932 harvest had been a catastrophically poor one. (Tauger 2004)

Government aid amounted to five million tons of food distributed as relief, including to Ukraine, beginning as early as February 7, 1933; the provision of tractors and other equipment distributed especially to Ukraine; "a network of several thousand political departments in the machine-tractor stations which contributed greatly to the successful harvest in 1933" (Tauger 2012b); and other measures, including special commissions on sowing and harvesting to manage work and distribute seed and food aid.

Some anticommunist "experts" have adopted the Ukrainian nationalists' "intentional" interpretation — the "Holodomor" myth. They claim the Soviet government cut the Ukraine off completely, making no effort to relieve the famine. They ignore environmental factors — which were in fact the primary causes — and fail to mention the Soviet government's large-scale relief campaign which, together with their own hard work under the most difficult conditions, enabled the peasants to produce a large harvest in 1933. In Tauger's judgment:

> *[T]he general point [is that] the famine was caused by natural factors and that the government helped the peasants produce a larger harvest the next year and end the famine.*

The so-called "Holodomor" or "deliberate" and "man-made" famine interpretation is not simply mistaken on some important points. Its proponents misrepresent history by omitting evidence that would undermine their interpretation. It is not history but political propaganda disguised as history.

Other writers like R. W. Davies and Stephen G. Wheatcroft adopt an interpretation similar to that of the Russian government. They attribute the famine to several causes, with collectivization being a very important, if not the most important cause. In their opinion environmental factors played only a secondary role. Those who take this view believe the Soviet government could have saved many, perhaps millions, of lives if collectivization had not been undertaken at all, and mitigated if the Soviet government had not handled the famine in a "brutal" manner.

As shown in the last article, this hypothesis, too, is mistaken. Environmental factors caused the famine. Collectivization, the role of the Soviet government in organizing and managing agriculture and seizing and redistributing the grain that did exist, plus the hard work of hungry peasants, brought in a successful harvest in 1933 and ended the famine.✪

French Fascists Stir Up Anti-Muslim Racism

For centuries, schools in France were run by the Catholic church. It was only in 1882 that the promotion of religion in public schools was ended. Ever since then, keeping religion out of the schools has been a left-wing position.

The fascist National Front (FN) copies the Hitler-era Nazis. The FN tries to co-opt left-wing causes. This is one way they attract workers disgusted with the broken promises of the Socialist Party and other fake left organizations.

The latest case in point was on April 4, when FN leader Marine Le Pen announced on RTL radio that the fascists would begin serving pork again in school canteens in the ten cities where the FN controls the city council. She claimed that Muslims were preventing non-Muslim students from eating pork because Islam forbids eating pork. She said the FN would defend the exclusion of religion from public schools.

Journalists from Libération newspaper discovered that it was all a big lie. Pork is on the menu in all French schools. In schools with Muslim and Jewish students, but there is often also a school lunch without pork.

The basis for the big lie was the fact that, for one week in 2011, in the town of Séméac (population 4,700), the school canteen only served non-pork meals – not because Muslims had imposed religious dietary laws, but because of a temporary kitchen problem that prevented the chef from preparing two different meals. The fascists used this to create a rumor to stir up hatred between Muslim and non-Muslim workers.

This is a typical example of the fascist technique of the big lie. Workers everywhere, and not just in France, must beware of this. In particular, the fascists are very clever at spreading their lies and rumors on the Internet.

Anti-fascist from France

In U.S.-Russian Rulers' Fight Over Ukraine, All Workers Lose

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found shale gas and free Europe from its dependence on Russian energy.

But for the foreseeable future, the U.S. bosses have neither the infrastructure nor the unity in Congress they need to export gas. Resources expert Michael Klare warned that "increased U.S. oil and gas output have provided White House officials with no particular advantage in their efforts to counter Putin's aggressive moves.... the prospect of future U.S. gas exports to Europe is unlikely to alter his strategic calculations" (OilPrice.com, 4/5/14).

The bosses also understand they need to ramp up militarism within the U.S. to protect those interests. One step in that direction is the ENLIST Act, now being debated in Washington. A more nightmarish version of the DREAM Act, it aims to draw undocumented youth into the Pentagon's war machine with the promise of citizenship.

But like the DREAM Act, ENLIST is likely to fail. It lacks bipartisan backing in Congress, and — most important — has failed to win mass working-class support, a problem for the capitalists since the Vietnam War.

Workers' Power Can Triumph

From Ukraine and Russia to Western Europe and the U.S., workers have nothing to gain from a war between the rival imperialist camps. Meanwhile, we suffer from the cyclical capitalist crises that cause mass unemployment, wage cuts, widespread poverty, reductions in healthcare, and increasing racist attacks on black, Latino, Asian, Muslim and Arab workers. The rulers use this racism to reap super-profits from super-exploited workers and also to divide the working class, weakening its ability to fight back.

The answer for our class is to destroy the capitalist system, the source of all our problems, and create a communist society free of bosses and profits, run by and for the working class. This can only be achieved through the leadership of a communist party, the Progressive Labor Party. Our goal is a communist revolution to smash the capitalists' state power and replace it with worldwide workers' power. A revolution means the overthrow of one ruling class and its replacement by the rule of the formerly oppressed class, the working class, which produces everything of value in society. This was never the aim of the bosses' phony "color revolutions," which merely replaced one set of bosses with another.

Capitalist society oppresses us today and will drive us into broader wars tomorrow, to kill our class sisters and brothers for the rulers' greater profit. But a united, communist-inspired working class, led by the revolutionary Progressive Labor Party, has the power to combat the bosses and ultimately to destroy their parasitic system. Join us!✪

'We will rise up to fulfill our destiny and rule the earth...'

The following letter is from a comrade in Haiti who heard one of his United States comrades had some health problems. She was touched by his comradely concern and revolutionary outlook and thought to share it with our CHALLENGE readers.



I just received the news of your health. I am moved to my innermost being. But I do not doubt your courage and your will to win for our class, despite illness and bad news about this "world without heart!"

Comrade, we are often betrayed by the size of our tasks. So much arduous work, worries and heartbreak to change the world from top to bottom spoils our physique. The long journeys here and there to help develop class conscience in our class, wear down our strength. But there is always the hope of our future that animates us, despite the daily task which becomes more difficult. Especially when there are borders between us, and we are divided by sexism, and racism kills us, the unjust system we live under tries to undermine us, then our solidarity becomes increasingly necessary and urgent.I regret frankly that I cannot come to see you physically. It is only possible to me to write to you.

Dear friend, I won't keep you too long, just want to let you know that we are continuing the struggle here. The rulers of the world do not know now that they are going to have to face the wrath of the entire international working class. That those of us who do not own the means of production, those without, will rise up one day to improve not only the material conditions of our lives, but also to fulfill our destiny and rule the earth. The stakes are enormous. But we will take the risk! It continues until the final victory .

My sincere greetings to all our comrades and friends. On to May Day!

Compère Général Soleil

A Factory Collective Expands Production in the Cultural Revolution

continued from page 8



into the right-sized pieces and used our sixty-ton press to shape them. Then they welded these blades onto the axis. The production line was streamlined and standardized, and the products were continuously shipped out to Qingdao.

Our county was on the coast, where fishing was a traditional industry. At the time, fishermen still used sails, which were dangerous when the boats were caught in storms. When I was still a young child, a serious storm took the lives of 70 fishermen. The county government was determined to modernize the industry by replacing sails with diesel engines.

Our factory got the contract to produce transmission boxes for the fishing boats. Two high school graduates, Liu Kefeng and Li Yuxun, were assigned the task. With blueprints from a state-owned enterprise in Rongcheng County, they began to figure out how to make the different parts and assemble them into a transmission box.

In 1973, a major contractor wanted to manufacture two ventilation blowers to improve workers' conditions. These blowers were huge, as large as small houses, and the contractor was not sure we'd be able to do it. After their technicians inspected our equipment, they said they did not believe we could do the work. (In fact, at first our own business manager wasn't sure we could do it. One of the visiting technicians was an eighth-rank metal worker, the highest in China at the time. He said that many factories with greater technical capacity than ours had turned the contract down.

Relying on the Workers

But our factory had a secret weapon, one of its original five workers: Wang Xuejin. In his early forties at the time, he could not draw or read a blueprint. But Wang had a rare knack when it came to innovation. Whenever the factory had a technical difficulty, the leaders would discuss it with him. He would work on it by drawing some lines on the ground with a stick. Then he would chat with other people in the factory and work on it some more. Sometimes he would have to think about it for a long time. Once Wang had developed an idea, he would call in a few technically savvy people to work with him and draw the blueprints.

The factory leaders badly wanted the contract for the two big blowers, but first they had to be sure the factory could handle it. The factory manager explained the difficulties to Wang. The main obstacle was that the factory lacked a press powerful enough to form the sheet metal into a horn-shaped part that drew air through the blowers. This one part was more than two meters in diameter at its smaller end and close to three meters at its larger end!

The manager asked Wang to find a way to circumvent the problem. Wang considered it for a whole morning by himself, then brainstormed with a few other workers in the factory. Toward the end of the afternoon, they managed to draw a simple blueprint showing how the part could be made without heavy equipment.

The factory manager went back to the top technician and told him he was now certain they'd be able to meet the contractor's three-month deadline for the blowers. We got the contract, since no one else could be found to do the work. But the technician was less than absolutely convinced we could do it, either. He left with the words that he would return in one month to check on our progress.

Next issue: The author graduates from high school, becomes a factory worker; a medical emergency; wages and collectivity.✪

12 Years A Slave Neglects Mass Rebellions that Ended Slavery

12 Years a Slave is the story of Solomon Northup, a free black man living in Saratoga, New York around 1841. He is kidnapped and sold into slavery. The film does a good job of depicting the horrors of slavery, from beatings to the humiliations of being treated like animals, with men and women paraded naked for potential buyers to inspect. I watched the movie with clenched fists and tight jaws — I wanted to see the slavers punished for their wrongdoing.

For all the degradation the slaves went through, the situation cried out for scenes of rebellion, but they are missing. There were many in those years that could have been referred to. Northup and some other kidnapped slaves do talk of a rebellion on the slave ship taking them to the South. It doesn't happen, though: Although Solomon says "The crew is fairly small...if it were well-planned, "I believe they could be strong armed." Another replies, "Three can't stand against the whole crew , the rest are N****** born and bred slaves. N****** ain't got the stomach for a fight, not a damn one." The movie illustrates racist division rather than unity. It ignores the unity of many white women and men — indentured servants — with slaves.

The movie also failed to show the critical role of women. Fighters such as Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Angelina and Sarah Grimke, were crucial in the fight against slavery, revealing that the fight against racism and sexism is one intertwined battle.

Personal vs. Collective Freedom

The movie also portrays Solomon as depending on the legal system for his personal freedom — if only he could get his "papers" from New York he could prove that he was a free man. The slave traders mocked him in this quest. This movie is concerned with the freedom of one slave while the whole system of slavery was causing misery for millions. It was not the legal system or a court or Abraham Lincoln that ended slavery; it took hundreds of slave rebellions, the abolitionists and a civil war to end it.

Never in mainstream media has the real story of Harriet Tubman, Nat Turner, and John Brown been told. In fact, there are over 400 accounts of recorded slave rebellions and revolts in the United States. Instead, the story of Solomon Northup highlights a single courageous black man's struggle to survive slavery only to wait 12 years to be freed by a stroke of luck and a sympathetic Canadian.

The end of slavery was not a simple death, either. The racism it rested on continued, and so did the power of the plantation-owning aristocrats. Within a few years after the Civil War ended they were back in power, using state, local and Federal governments, their courts and the Ku Klux Klan to spread racist terror throughout the South, ushering in the era of Jim Crow. They used intimidation and lynching to enforce power to terrorize the black working-class population — and to warn off any whites who understood the need for unity between black and white workers.

The power of workers fighting back together can be seen in one incident: the attempted judicial lynching of nine young black men by the state of Alabama in 1931. Known as the Scottsboro Boys, they were arrested and tried on fake charges of raping two white women on a train. Even though one of the accusers admitted it was a lie, within two weeks their trial was over and they were sentenced to death.

But the International Labor Defense (ILD), led by the U.S. Communist Party, took their case, determined that "they shall not die." Unlike the movie, they used but didn't depend on the legal system. The ILD provided the lawyers and the legal fight; the Communist Party organized mass demonstrations around the world, in Latin America, Europe, Asia, the Soviet Union and across the U.S. The campaign saved them from the electric chair — but even though they were innocent some of them still served many years in jail.



In the movie *12 Years a Slave*, it is a big letdown to see one man freed by a sheriff, while all the others on the plantation are left in bondage. The sharp contrast to the case of the Scottsboro Boys, and the mass actions led by communists, exposing Jim Crowism to the whole world, show us how to fight against slavery and racism, and that fight continues to this day.✪

RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

Advances bring no leisure, no jobs

NY Daily News, 3/26 — The future's here and it's troubling.

First, the upside: computers and machines can now drive cars, perform surgeries and report news.

A recent Oxford study predicts that 47% of the jobs Americans work at are now prime candidates to be taken over by "computerization" in the next decade or two….

People like to eat, though. And it's not clear what sort of work many of us will do to pay for the burger we order on a tablet and that's cooked to order by a machine.

The low-end service jobs that have accounted for almost all new jobs in New York in recent years — and which had been better protected than manufacturing positions, since they can't be outsourced — look to be the ones that computerization will strip away….

A machine can now make my eggs fast and right every time, with no human hands involved and for a lower cost…..

It's not like this moment has snuck up on us; scientists, artists and thinkers like Alan Turing, Italo Calvino and Arthur Clark have been telling us about thinking machines for many decades.

So far, they've meant low wages and high unemployment — not liberated lives of leisure.

Gov't officials blink at GM danger

NYT, 3/31 — Federal regulators decided not to open an inquiry on the Chevrolet Cobalts and other cars even after their own investigators reported in 2007 that they knew of four fatal crashes, 29 complaints and 14 other reports that showed the problem [to be] disabled air bags….

A memo also revealed that General Motors approved the faulty design of a switch in 2002 even though…the switch did not meet specifications….

…Both GM and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration…ignored or dismissed warnings for more than a decade about a faulty ignition switch that, if bumped, could turn off, shutting the engine and disabling the air bags. General Motors has [now] recalled nearly 2.6 million cars and has linked 13 deaths to the defect.

Million in NY too poor to buy food

NY Daily News, 3/12 — It's a quiet crisis. In a city of plenty, a staggering number of people are struggling to feed themselves and their families.

Nearly one in five New Yorkers, 1.4 million people, now rely on a patchwork of 1,000 food pantries and soup kitchens across the city to eat.

That represents an increase of 200,000 people in five years — straining the charities that are trying to help.

The two biggest, City Harvest and the Food Bank for New York City, now provide nearly 110 million pounds of food to soup kitchens and food pantries a year.

Yet those working on the front lines of the hunger crisis say it's still not enough.

"It's an astounding surge in need, and it's because it is so hard for people to find jobs, or to find a decent-paying job….

U.S. Latinos say voting is useless

NYT, 3/31 — AURORA, Colo. — As the weather warms, Lizeth Chacon is anticipating a new season of registering Latino voters — yet dreading experiences like one late last year, when she came upon a skate park full of older teenagers.

"I thought, 'The perfect age! They're turning 18," said Ms. Chacon, just 26 herself, born in Mexico and the lead organizer at Rights for All People, a local immigrant organizing group. But among the roughly 50 people she approached in this increasingly diverse city east of Denver, "not a single person" was interested in her pitch, including those already old enough to vote: "They were like, 'Why? Why would I bother to vote?'"

Across the country, immigrant-rights advocates report mounting disillusionment with both parties among Latinos….

Child poverty = lifelong bad health

NYT, 3/28 — In 1972, researchers in North Carolina started following two groups of babies from poor families. In the first group, the children were given full-time day care up to age 5 that included most of their daily meals, talking, games and other stimulating activities. The other group, aside from baby formula, got nothing. The scientists were testing whether the special treatment would lead to better cognitive abilities in the long run.

Forty-two years later, the researchers found something that they had not expected to see: The group that got care was far healthier….

The study…is part of a growing body of evidence that hardship in early childhood has lifelong health implications….

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

A Factory Collective Expands Production in the Cultural Revolution

Almost 45 years after the reversal of the Chinese Revolution, China has emerged as a major capitalist power and appears to be on a collision course with U.S. imperialism. The Chinese Revolution was one of the great achievements of the 20th Century — an advance over the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

In 1967, more than 40 million workers, soldiers, and students launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR). It was an effort to stop the return to capitalism in China. Ultimately it was defeated, in part because the Red Guards and other revolutionary forces were unable to organize a new revolutionary communist party.

The following account shows the need for further advances in the international revolutionary movement. Wages must be eliminated, along with the special oppression of women. Above all, we must create a worker-run society based on one unwavering principle:

From each according to commitment, to each according to need.

Progressive Labor Party, in our infancy at the time of the GPCR, was a fraternal party of the Chinese Communist Party. And we supported the GPCR. The defeat of the GPCR and the reversal of the Chinese revolution signaled the end of the old communist movement. These setbacks plunged the international working class into the Dark Night we have struggled through for more than two generations.

But Dark Night will have its end. World War I gave rise to the Bolshevik Revolution. World War II give birth to the Chinese Revolution. PLP, organizing across all borders, aims to make the next imperialist war the last one, with worldwide communist revolution.

This is a story of a collectively owned village factory. In the winter of 1966, at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, the eighth production team of my Village decided to set up a metal shop. The team employed two old farmers who had worked with sheet metal before, and three other people with no experience in metal work. In need of a site, they rented a vacant three-room house from my family.

The workshop was to produce metal pieces for both ornamental and practical purposes — handles for drawers, doorknobs, and so on. The production team bought a truckload of leftover metal pieces from a factory in Qingdao City for very little money, and began to make their products with simple metal cutters and hammers.

The products sold very well on the local market. Shortly before the Chinese New Year that winter, every family in the production team — including those taking care of the farm work — received a collective bonus from the extra earnings from the metal shop.

Noting the success of this enterprise, village leaders proposed expanding the metal shop into a bigger operation. The production team leaders agreed, so the metal shop moved into the village-owned motel, which for years had catered to travelers with horse-drawn carts. There were more than a dozen rooms and three to four acres of yard space. The village invested in more tools and hired a few more workers.

Apart from maintaining the original product line, the new workshop also sought to expand production into other areas. The village sent several young people to a farming machine factory, a state-owned enterprise about three kilometers from the village, to be trained for different industrial skills. Some learned to assemble or operate lathes, others to weld with electricity or weld and cut with gas torches.

As a state-owned enterprise, the factory's mission was in part to help rural areas in whatever way they could. The factory leadership trained village youth for free for six months. At the end of the training period, they donated to the village all the tools the young people had been trained to use: an old lathe, a planer, a drill, and a thirty-ton press, along with many smaller tools. The factory also donated the parts needed to assemble two newer lathes and a sixty-ton press. With these tools and more than a dozen trained workers, the factory's technical capacity was greatly expanded.

The village factory also received contributions from other factories, including some electric motors. The political climate at the time eased the transfer of old equipment from state-owned enterprises to the villages for collective use, most of it free of charge.

At the time, most tractors in China's rural areas had no shelter for the driver's head. The village factory set out to make a metal cab for the driver with a roof and two doors. It shielded the driver from the sun and the cold in winter, and became a highly popular product. The line of tractor drivers desiring the metal cab was very long; people had to wait for months for their turn.

The cab was designed by Huang Jianguo together with Liu Jiawen and Liu Jiazhou. Huang, a middle-school graduate, drew the blueprints; Liu Jiawen and Liu Jiazhou developed the manufacturing process. The factory made good money from this product line for a number of years. More important, the process trained many young people in working with sheet metal. Soon the factory gained a reputation for innovative practices. It took on the name of Mohan (Welding and Fixing) Factory.

Soon Mohan began making ventilation fans for textile factories in Qingdao. The textile industry was expanding at the time and needed a great quantity of these fans for the health and safety of the textile workers. A group of our factory workers specialized in making this product. They cut the sheet metal

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Brooklyn: April 26 at 11 AM
Location: Ocean Ave and Parkside Ave
Los Angeles: May 1 at 10 AM
Location: Cesar Chavez and Broadway



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